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HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, August 2, 1932

(For Broadcast Use Only)

Subject: "A Garden Dinner." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Information available: "Peach Recipes". Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

Yesterday on your regular weekly saving day, the home dressmaker had her innings. When we finished chatting about what to do with clothing left-overs, we had no time to discuss our usual Monday economy meal. So today we're going to give the thrifty cook her innings first. The Menu Specialist has planned a garden dinner for the family.

In winter, and often also in spring and fall, fresh fruits and vegetables may cost so much that any thrifty housewife must use them sparingly to make the budget balance. But at this season, with gardens flourishing everywhere, even the most economical menu-maker can revel in fresh foods to her heart's content. Fresh fruits and vegetables in season, especially when you have a garden of your own, are low in cost, fine in flavor and good for the health of every member of the family. So, now is the time to feature garden meals often, to serve a vegetable plate for the main course at least once or twice a week, to serve a crisp fresh salad every day or even twice a day, and to give the family such garden delicacies as vegetable cocktails.

Our garden dinner for today is a vegetable plate dinner. Uncle Ebenzer says that a vegetable plate is like the little girl in the old rhyme--when it's good, it's very, very good, and when it's bad, it's horrid.

I'll have to confess that I've had experience with both varieties,--the very, very good vegetable dinner and--the other. Any one with even slight cooking experience can easily prepare a vegetable meal fit for a king, yet many a time I've had a plate of vegetables set before me that was a blight on the appetite, a plate of forlorn, bedraggled vegetables, almost floating in the water they were cooked in, vegetables with neither good looks nor good flavor.

"Well, then," asks Arabella, "how do you prepare one of these very good vegetable plates?"

Just about four suggestions will answer that question.

First, choose three or more vegetables that are different in color, flavor and texture, but that look attractive served on the same plate.

Second, cook the vegetables until just tender--no longer, and serve them at once. Be sure to drain any excess water so the plates won't be moist. Nobody enjoys a plate of swimming vegetables.

Third, season the vegetables well and serve them attractively. Use your artistic eye when you arrange them on the plate, so that the whole effect will wake up appetites at the first glimpse. If you need a dash of extra color here and there, especially on white vegetables, use a sprinkling of red paprika or some chopped green parsley.

Now, if you're ready with your pencils, we'll talk over today's menu. For the vegetables plate: Buttered sliced beets; Creamed carrots or creamed diced potatoes; Snap beans, buttered; Hot biscuits.

Next, you'll want an inexpensive garden salad. How about shredded lettuce salad seasoned with vinegar and bacon drippings? If you have radishes and onions in your garden, they'll add color and flavor to this salad.

Finally, dessert. Here's where the garden fruits come in. Mistress Mary, quite contrary how does your garden grow? With berry bushes, melon vines and apple trees all in a row? I hope so. Then you can have a choice in your fruit desserts. If any berries are left on your bushes, they are good for pies, short-cakes, fruit flummery or fruit tapioca pudding. If your early apples are ready you can serve early apple sauce with simple cookies. If you have peach trees, how about a fresh peach pie or a peach tapioca pudding?

Yes, Arabella, I'm pleased to announce that I have an excellent recipe for peach tapioca pudding. It calls for seven ingredients.

- 1/4 cup of quick cooking tapioca
- 1 and 1/2 cups of hot water
- 1 cup of sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon of salt
- 2 tablespoons of lemon juice, and
- 1 quart of sliced peaches

Did you get all those seven ingredients? Maybe I'd better repeat the list. (Repeat)

To make the pudding, the first thing to do is to cook the tapioca and the water together in a double boiler for 15 minutes, stirring frequently. Add the sugar, butter, salt and lemon juice. In a greased baking dish, make alternate layers of the tapioca and the peaches. But be sure to have a layer of peaches on top. Bake in a moderate oven for about 30 minutes.

You can serve this dessert either hot or cold with cream.

Now let's see. What's next on the program? More questions. I have a fat pile of letters right here with me. Each letter is filled with questions.

But before we begin on those questions, maybe you'd like me to go over that garden dinner menu once again. All right. Buttered sliced beets; Creamed carrots or creamed diced potatoes; Green or snap beans; Hot biscuits; Shredded lettuce salad seasoned with vinegar and bacon drippings; New apple sauce and cookies, or a fresh peach dessert.

By the way, beets from your garden, ought to do for two meals. Serve beet greens at one meal and beets at another. Those tender green beet tops are much too good to go to waste. But I don't need to tell you that. Most garden owners indulge in beet greens early in the summer when they're thinning out the beet patch.

There now. That's the menu. Let's turn to the letters.

One lady wants to know the approved way of canning peaches. Well, peaches are among the very easiest fruits to can. You can process them in a hot water bath. Many women use their big wash boilers to can peaches or other acid foods. A good wash boiler with a tight-fitting lid and a rack inside to hold the jars off the bottom, will do nicely for a water-bath canner. Of course, you can buy canners on the market made just for this purpose.

Here's how the specialists say to can peaches.

First, before you get the fruit ready, make a thin sirup using 1 cup of sugar and 3 cups of water or fruit juice. (If you prefer a richer juice, use more sugar.) For flavor, put in a cracked peach pit for every quart of sirup. Boil for five minutes and strain the sirup.

Next step. Prepare the peaches. First put them in boiling water for about one minute to loosen the skins so they will slip off easily. Then plunge the peaches at once in cold water for a few seconds. Now remove the skins, cut the peaches in halves, and discard the stones. Put the halves in the jar at once in overlapping layers. Put in each peach half with the inside of the concave surface downward. Then fill the containers with boiling sirup, and put them in the water bath. Process quart and pint glass jars for thirty minutes in boiling water, if the fruit is fairly hard and firm. If it is ripe and tender process for only twenty minutes. Process No. 2 and No. 3 tin cans for 15 minutes.

You can use peaches in so many different ways that you never need to let them go to waste on the tree. The surplus peaches you can preserve for winter use not only by canning but also by pickling, or in marmalade, jam, butter and preserves. Fresh peaches will make peach ice cream; peach melba; peach sauce for ice cream, cakes and puddings; baked peaches; peach bavarian cream; jellied peaches and almonds; peach tapioca; plain peach pie and peach cream pie; peach shortcake, cobbler and dumplings.

If you want recipes to help you save peaches, we have all these good ones. And you can have them for the asking.

Later in the week--maybe tomorrow, maybe Thursday--we'll have a chat on pickling fruit. And at that time I'll give you directions for pickling peaches.

And while we're looking into the future, let me tell you about Friday's program--this coming Friday. A New England friend of mine who has been to real, honest-and-true, old-time New England clam bakes all her life, has given me complete directions for a clam bake. Perhaps you'll want to give one this summer for your church, or your club, or some other community gathering.

